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SUBJECT: NSA NARAYANAN URGES "BIG TICKET ITEM" FOR PM VISIT

Classified By: Charge Robert O. Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) In an April 18 meeting, SA A/S Rocca, joined by Charge, reaffirmed to Indian NSA MK Narayanan USG interest in a visit by PM Manmohan Singh to Washington in July, and urged the PM to commit to a date as soon as possible. Evincing uncertainty as to the exact dates under consideration, Narayanan responded that the PM was seriously considering the invitation because it had been extended by both the President and Secretary Rice. He appreciated that the PM "will be received in grand and majestic style," but India also wanted the trip to yield tangible results, asking bluntly "what will you give us?"

¶2. (C) Alluding to the inevitable questions from the Parliamentary opposition and the government's Communist coalition partners as to why the PM wanted to make a special trip to the United States in July when he was going to the UNGA in September, Narayanan said that New Delhi needed "more on the table." Mentioning civil nuclear cooperation in particular, the NSA said major progress in this area "would make the visit worthwhile."

¶3. (C) After a brief review of US interest in a significantly expanded relationship with India, A/S Rocca underlined that the Indian Parliament's passage of export control legislation required under the NSSP would open many doors in the US, mentioning space cooperation as one possible area, and stressing that the USG would have greater flexibility in other areas as well. Narayanan responded that although the draft law had not yet been tabled, it "would come through."

¶4. (C) Emphasizing that the PM's visit to Washington is "not conditional on anything," the NSA reiterated that the PM would like to be able to demonstrate tangible results, and "a big ticket item" would be good for both countries. A/S Rocca told Narayanan that it was the US intention for the PM's visit to be marked by significant progress in the US-India relationship, leading to the President's visit to India later in the year or in early 2006, but that the sooner a good Indian export control law is passed, the easier it will be for the USG to consider options.

¶5. (U) A/S Rocca cleared this cable.

BLAKE